

Brother Knights,

Merry Christmas to you and your family!

Yes, 2020 has been anything but a normal year, but we have so much to be thankful for. This year will be forever known as the year our Founder became the Blessed Father Michael McGivney! Take a moment and read this inspiring yuletide story about the early years of Father McGivney, shared by Brian Caulfield, the vice-postulator for the canonization cause of Venerable Father McGivney.

“It was an especially joyous occasion for Father Michael McGivney when he entered his boyhood church for Christmas celebrations in 1877. He was 25 years old, newly ordained, and ready to offer his first Solemn Mass before family members and friends at Immaculate Conception Church in his hometown of Waterbury, Conn. The popular young man, known for his winning manner and personal piety, was among his own people of Irish immigrants, including his mother, and first-generation Irish-Americans like himself and his siblings. Along with the joy of the event, there must have been a few nervous moments for the new priest as he celebrated for the first time the refined and elaborate rites of the solemn Latin Mass.

Though he was confident of his vocation, the path to the priesthood was far from simple for young McGivney. As the eldest of 13 children, he followed his father into factory life after completing school at age 13, working two years for a spoon manufacturer. The local pastor, however, encouraged him to consider the priesthood, and in 1868 young Michael took a train with a handful of other Waterbury teens to Quebec to begin studies at the College of St. Hyacinthe. It was his first time out of the country, but he felt at home with the idea of the priesthood. He continued his formation with the study of the classics at Niagara University’s Our Lady of Angels Seminary, where he played for the school’s Charter Oaks baseball team. In the fall of 1872, he returned to Canada to begin philosophy studies at St. Mary’s College Seminary in Montreal.

But when Michael went home to Waterbury for the sad occasion of his father’s funeral in June 1873, his plans for priesthood were as unclear as his family’s finances. However, seeing the great potential in young McGivney, Hartford’s Bishop Francis McFarland provided a scholarship for him to study theology for four years at St. Mary’s Seminary in Baltimore, where he excelled. Michael J. McGivney was ordained Dec. 22, 1877, in the Baltimore cathedral by Archbishop James Gibbons, who later became a cardinal. After ordination, Father McGivney embarked on the long trip to Waterbury, in central Connecticut, to offer his first solemn Mass – a hometown boy who made good in a growing American Church.

In the new year, he would begin his ministry as a parish priest at St. Mary’s in New Haven, where he befriended a band of resourceful, energetic Irishmen and made plans for the formation of the Knights of Columbus. Today, he is a candidate for sainthood with his cause active at the Vatican.”

With Covid continuing to be a major health concern in the county, our January 5th meeting will be cancelled. Our hope is that we will be able to resume our meetings at church starting February 2nd.

To our newer brothers of our council, Dan Van Bortel will be calling to introduce you to Knights of Columbus insurance. More accurately, he will review your current insurance and investment plan. I have been working closely with him and have been very pleasantly surprised at how he’s been able to help Lori and me. I encourage all brother knights to contact Dan at 920-659-1918 and see how he can help you!

Progress is continuing to be made for our Super Bowl weekend fund raiser. I will update you as firm details come together. Good news for John Pfankuch; while I received more than three responses, we did not quite get to 20. So, John will not be showing up at your house to wash your dishes this Christmas. The super seven who have already agreed to help: Bill Rusch, David Flood, Chris Meyer, Robert Pauley, Ron Kapellen, Paul Verhage and Richard Diedrich!

If you are fortunate enough to see these Brother Knights, make sure to wish them a happy birthday! These men have shared their birthday with the Christmas season all their lives, so they deserve an extra special Happy Birthday! Gregory Krusiec 12-02, Wayne Keyes 12-04, Jason Sebranek 12-04, William Hand 12-07, Greg Ceilley 12-08, Joel Sandersen 12-09, Robert Grimes 12-15, Richard Servais 12-19, Noel Friederichs 12-22, Thomas Fohr 12-25, Thomas Brink 12-28!

While we are at it, there are our January Brothers. Like our December brothers, they came into this world during the coldest months of the year! Gerald Brunner 01-04, Dr. James Nass 01-07, Richard Burbach 01-10, Ronald Platz 01-11, William Barbieur 01-24, Nels Nelson 01-28, Wallace Hecker 01-31!

Brothers, the magic of Christmas is not in the presents; it is in his presence! Jesus is present in each of our lives. Continue to keep him in your hearts; welcome him in all your family get-togethers during the holiday season and throughout the year.

Vivat Jesus!
Jesus Lives!

Grand Knight Greg Grimes